

1. From warp speed to reset, the state of India-U.S. ties

GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:** June 2024 marks a year since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the United States, where **strategic cooperation between India and the U.S.** was emphasized. However, one year later, the pace of the relationship has not met expectations due to various internal and external factors.
 - **Crests in the Relationship:**
 - **Strengthening Ties Post-Pokhran:** The relationship between India and the U.S. has witnessed significant growth since Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's speech in 1998, marking 25 years of improved relations **post-Pokhran**. Strategic dialogues have expanded across various sectors, including **climate change, technology, and outer space**.
 - **Enhanced Strategic Trust:** The increasing strategic trust is evident in the conclusion of foundational agreements, military exercises, and growing coordination on maritime operations. Old issues (**S.-India ties with Pakistan and concerns over J&K**) have diminished.
 - **Bilateral Engagement Thriving:** Despite challenges, bilateral engagement between India and the U.S. continues to thrive, with official-level dialogues ongoing.
 - **The China Factor and Multilateral Cooperation:**
 - **Quad Cooperation Hindered:** Cooperation between India and the U.S. at the **Quad** faced logistical challenges. Planned visits by senior U.S. officials were also affected, impacting the review of the **ICET initiative**.
 - **Strained Diplomatic Relations:** Diplomatic relations between India and the U.S. have faced strains, with tensions arising over comments on **human rights and democracy**. Differences in approaches to global conflicts (Russia's actions in Ukraine and Israel's actions in Gaza), have further complicated the relationship.
 - **Concerns Over 'Plots' and Security:** The relationship faces challenges related to security and perceptions of India's involvement in alleged plots abroad, such as the **attempted assassination of Khristani separatist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun in New York**.

Why in News: International climate change litigation reached a milestone, with the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)** delivering an advisory opinion sought by the **Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS)**. The opinion clarifies specific obligations of parties to the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** regarding climate change mitigation.

- Key Elements of the Advisory Opinion:**

 - **Identification of Specific Obligations:** The ITLOS advisory opinion identified under Article 194(1) of the UNCLOS that parties have specific obligations to prevent, reduce, and control marine pollution from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).
 - **Importance of Carbon as a Pollutant:** Carbon dioxide emissions contribute to the acidification of seawater and higher ocean temperatures, resulting in sea-level rise. This recognition bolsters efforts to address the impact of anthropogenic GHG emissions on marine environments.

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of climate change. Climate litigation has gained a real momentum in 2023, as evidenced by the Tribunal and the ICJ. The LOS also delivered an advisory opinion on the obligations of states to prevent and reduce greenhouse gases on Climate Change and International Environmental Law. The ICJ also issued an advisory opinion on the obligations of states in the context of the UNFCCC. The ICJ also issued an advisory opinion on the obligations of states in the context of the UNFCCC. The ICJ also issued an advisory opinion on the obligations of states in the context of the UNFCCC.

- **Collective Responsibility and Diligence Obligation:** The advisory opinion underscores the principle of **collective responsibility in addressing climate change**, emphasizing necessary measures based on the best available science and international agreements like the **Paris Climate Change Agreement**.
- **Legal Implications and Challenges:**
 - **Interpretation of Obligations:** There are general obligations for states to reduce GHG emissions, there is no specificity regarding the methodology for assessing mitigation actions. This ambiguity presents challenges in determining the requisite level of action and **adherence to international standards**.
 - **Consideration of Means and Capabilities:** The recognition that necessary measures must consider the means available to states and their capabilities, highlights the principle of equity in addressing climate change. It underscores the need for fair and balanced approaches.
 - **Political and Legal Authority:** Despite lacking legal force, the advisory carries political weight as an **authoritative judicial pronouncement**. It serves as a **guiding principle for states** in navigating climate change mitigation efforts, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation and adherence to established standards.

3. Birsa Munda

Recent events of importance

Why in News: The Jharkhand Governor and Chief Minister recently paid tribute to tribal icon Birsa Munda on his death anniversary.

About Birsa Munda:

- He was a folk hero and a **tribal freedom fighter** who played a pivotal role in the Indian independence movement, particularly in the tribal regions of British India.
- He belonged to the Munda tribe in the **Chota Nagpur Plateau area**.
- He **spearheaded an Indian tribal mass movement** that arose in the **Bihar and Jharkhand** belts in the **early 19th century** under British colonisation.
- Munda rallied the tribals to fight **against the forceful land grabbing** carried out **by the British government**, which would turn the tribals into bonded labourers and force them to abject poverty.
- He influenced his people to realise the **importance of owning their land** and asserting their rights over it.
- Birsa **encouraged the tribe to stick to their traditions** and get back to their tribal roots.
- One of Birsa's notable contributions was the formation of the **Munda Rebellion**, also known as the **Ulgulan**, or the **Tamar Revolt**, in the **late 19th century**.
 - ◆ The rebellion was a response to the **oppressive policies of the British** administration, including the introduction of the **forest laws**, that restricted tribal access to their traditional lands, and the imposition of **exorbitant taxes**.
 - ◆ Birsa united various tribal communities under the banner of the Munda Raj and **led a series of guerrilla warfare campaigns** against the British forces.
 - ◆ Birsa Munda's leadership during the Munda Rebellion earned him the title of "**Bhagwan**" or "**Birsa Bhagwan**" among his followers.
- He often **took inspiration from Munda traditions, Christianity and Hinduism** to guide his followers in rituals and prayers.
- His struggle against exploitation and discrimination against tribals led to a big hit against the British government in the form of the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act** being passed in 1908.
 - ◆ The act **restricted the passing on of land from the tribal people to non-tribals**.
- Birsa also played a crucial religious role among the Munda people.
 - ◆ He **founded the faith of Birsait**, a blend of animism and indigenous beliefs, which emphasized the worship of a single god.
 - ◆ He became their leader and was given the nickname, '**Dharti Aba**' or the **father of the earth**.
- He died on June 9, 1900, at age 25.
- In recognition of his impact on the national movement, the **state of Jharkhand** was **created on his birth anniversary in 2000**.
 - ◆ November 15, the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda, was declared 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas' by the Central Government in 2021.

4. Why India needs a third aircraft carrier

GS 2 (Security)

- **Why in News:** Recent media reports indicate progress towards the construction of a **third aircraft carrier** for the **Indian Navy** by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), aiming to prevent the lapse of carrier-building expertise and addressing long-standing operational requirements.

- **Key Aspects of the Third Aircraft Carrier:**

- **Naval Imperatives and Historical Precedents:** The decision to proceed with the construction of the **Indigenous Aircraft Carrier-2 (IAC-2)** reflects the Indian Navy's strategic imperative to maintain a robust fleet, recalling past lapses in submarine-building expertise. The initiative seeks to avoid a repeat of past mistakes, such as the **dissipation of Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilder's capabilities**, and instead ensure continuity in carrier-building capabilities.

- **Operational Significance and Challenges:** The IAC-2, an addition to the **Vikrant-class carriers**, aims to fulfill the Navy's requirement for carrier presence on both seaboard and a reserve carrier. However, concerns linger regarding the project's substantial cost, estimated at \$5-6 billion, and its operational effectiveness in the face of evolving **anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities**, particularly from **China and Pakistan**.

- **Strategic Considerations and Alternative**

Approaches: Debates within the Indian Navy revolve around the strategic choice between pursuing a '**sea denial**' strategy, primarily utilizing submarines, or investing in '**sea control**' through carrier battle groups. Some voices question the prioritization of a new carrier over other critical naval assets, such as submarines and surface combatants.

- **Exploring Alternative Strategies and Upgrading Capabilities:**

- **Diversifying Military Capabilities:** Alternative strategies include enhancing military capabilities in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago to establish an **A2/AD maritime 'exclusive zone'**, deterring potential threats, including the Chinese navy. This approach offers a potentially cost-effective and resilient alternative to investing in additional aircraft carriers.
- **Leveraging Existing Assets and Technological Advancements:** Some advocate for maximizing the operational capabilities of existing assets, such as **SEPECAT Jaguar IM/IS** and **Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighters**, equipped with maritime strike capabilities and advanced radar systems. Additionally, the deployment of Su-30MKI squadrons armed with supersonic cruise missiles enhances the Indian Air Force's maritime surveillance and strike capabilities.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis and Strategic Prioritization:** Military planners weigh the costs and benefits of aircraft carriers against alternative defense strategies and asset upgrades. The limited defense budget, coupled with competing demands from other branches of the military, underscores the need for strategic prioritization and resource optimization in addressing India's security challenges.

Recent media reports indicate that the Indian Navy's long-standing demand for a third aircraft carrier is finally shuffling closer to fruition, with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) set to begin the construction of an indigenously built 40,000-tonne carrier.



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Furthermore, recent advances in cruise missile technology have made it easier and cheaper for countries like China and Pakistan to conduct A2/AD operations. So much so that even the U.S. Navy considered China's evolved A2/AD strategy a serious threat to its fleet, and remained wary of challenging it.

Moreover, within the Indian Navy, opinion was split between operationally pursuing a 'sea denial' strategy, largely by deploying submarines, or alternately seeking a 'sea control' approach via costly and relatively more vulnerable carrier battle groups comprising multiple surface and underwater escorts.

Some also questioned the monetary logic of building a new carrier at the cost of inducting additional 'killer-hunter' SSKs whose numbers in the Indian Navy had depleted to 16, of which 11 from Russia and Germany were either beyond, or nearing retirement. These SSKs were eight boats less than the 24 which the Navy was projected to operate by 2030 in accordance with its Maritime Capability Perspective Plan (MCPP).

Correspondingly, equally critical surface combatants like corvettes, mine-sweepers, destroyers and frigates too were in short supply, as were naval utility helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles, and other assorted missiles and ordnance.

Financial constraints have forced the Indian Navy to revise its goal of operating 200 assorted warships by 2027 in keeping with the MCPP. These fiscal shortages had also reduced the Navy's demand for 12 mine counter measures to eight and an additional 10 Boeing P-8I Neptune long range maritime multi-mission aircraft, to just six.

Meanwhile, the Indian Air

Force (IAF) along with the Indian Army was forever competing for a greater share of depreciating annual defence budgets, as it grappled to make good its fighter, helicopter and transport aircraft shortages, alongside other essential equipment.

IAF veterans reasoned that under the prevailing penurious conditions, an aircraft carrier would not only be a 'costly indulgence' but more pertinently, entail building a platform vulnerable to formidable A2/AD threats.

Other IAF officers believed that SEPECAT Jaguar IM/IS and multi-role Russian Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighters, fitted with enhanced maritime strike capability and extended strike ranges, could project power more economically and securely than a carrier.

The IAF's maritime Jaguar IM fleet, for instance, is armed with AGM-84 Block II Harpoon missiles and is also being equipped with Israel Aerospace Industries-Elta EL/M-2052/2060 multi-mode active electronically scanned array radar for sea-borne operations.

Upgrading capabilities
And, in early 2020 the IAF had commissioned its first Su-30MKI squadron, armed with the BrahMos-Air supersonic cruise missile at Thiruvananthapuram on India's southeast coast to monitor its seacoast and the wider Indian Ocean Region. Military planners said Su-30MKI would enhance the IAF's capability to engage potential maritime targets with pinpoint accuracy.

Other navalists favoured upgrading the military capabilities of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago, by creating an A2/AD maritime 'exclusive zone' around it to deter, amongst others, the hegemonic Chinese navy. And while the archipelago was undoubtedly 'immovable' it was likely to be cheaper than an aircraft carrier, besides being unsinkable.

- The financial assistance is directly transferred to the beneficiaries' bank accounts.
- **Implemented by:** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
- **PM-KISAN Mobile App:** Developed and designed by the National Informatics Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

7. ISRO's Aditya-L1 Spacecraft Captures Solar Activity GS 3 (Science and Tech)

- **Why in News:** ISRO's Aditya-L1 spacecraft, equipped with two remote sensing instruments - **Solar Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope (SUIT)** and **Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC)**, has captured recent solar activity.
- **Key-highlights:**
 - Aditya-L1 reached the **Lagrangian point (L1)** in January 2024, 127 days after its launch on in September 2023. L1 is approximately 1.5 million km from Earth, allowing continuous observation of the Sun.
 - **Remote Sensing Instruments:** SUIT and VELC onboard Aditya-L1 have recorded dynamic activities of the Sun during May 2024.
 - SUIT captures **solar ultraviolet images**, while VELC observes **visible emission lines** from the Sun.
 - **Solar Events Recorded:** Several X-class and M-class flares, accompanied by Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs), were detected during May 2024, leading to significant geomagnetic storms.
 - The **active region AR13664** on the Sun erupted **multiple X-class and M-class flares** during May. These events caused major **geomagnetic disturbances**.
- **About Aditya-L1**
 - Aditya-L1 is a satellite dedicated to the comprehensive study of the Sun.
 - The orbiter carries seven scientific instruments to observe and study-
 - ◆ the solar corona (the outermost layer)
 - ◆ the photosphere (the Sun's surface or the part we see from the Earth)
 - ◆ the chromosphere (a thin layer of plasma that lies between the photosphere and the corona)
 - Aditya L1 is India's first space-based mission to study the solar system's biggest object
- **Basic Concepts:**
 - **Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs):** Powerful eruptions of solar plasma and magnetic field from the Sun's corona into space.
 - **Solar Flares:** Sudden bursts of energy and radiation from the Sun's surface, often associated with magnetic disturbances and emissions across the electromagnetic spectrum.
 - **Geomagnetic Storms:** Disturbances in Earth's magnetic field caused by interactions with solar wind and CMEs, potentially leading to disruptions in communication systems and power grids.
 - **Lagrangian point (L1):** L1 is a location in space where the gravitational forces of two celestial bodies, such as the Sun and Earth, are in equilibrium. This allows an object placed there to remain relatively stable with respect to both celestial bodies. L1 is located 1.5 million km (932,000 miles) from the Earth, which is 1% of the Earth-Sun distance

ISRO releases images of sun captured by Aditya-L1 during May

The Hindu Bureau

BENGALURU

Two of the remote sensing payloads aboard India's maiden solar mission, Aditya-L1, have captured images of the sun and its dynamic activities during the solar storm, which occurred in May.

Between May 8 and 15, several X-class and M-class flares erupted in the active region AR13664 on the sun. This was associated with coronal mass ejections (CMEs) during May 8 and 9.

The ISRO said that during these eruptive events, two remote sensing instruments, Solar Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) and Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC), were in baking and calibration modes, respectively, and could not observe the event during May 10 and 11. However, SUIT and VELC doors were opened on May 14.

Apart from capturing images, these payloads have made important observations.

On June 10, the ISRO released six images of the sun taken by the SUIT payload at different wavelengths. The images were acquired by the payload on May 17.

According to the ISRO, these images will help in

studying solar flares, energy distribution and sun spots, understanding and predicting space weather, and monitoring solar activity and UV radiation over a wide wavelength range, and also aid in the study of long-term solar variations.

In addition, the VELC payload also carried out observations in one of the spectroscopic channels for the emission line 5303 Angstrom.

Raster scans of the solar corona were carried out on May 14 to capture the coronal activities in this particular spectral line.

Two other remote sensing payloads, SoLEXS and HELIOS, captured these events between May 8 and 9.

The two in-situ payloads, ASPeX and MAG, captured this event on May 10 and 11 during its passage through the sun-earth L1 point (L1).



8. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** The newly formed Cabinet has decided to further expand the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and construct 3 crore additional rural and urban houses.
- **About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana**
 - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) is a **credit-linked subsidy scheme** initiated to provide **affordable housing** to low and moderate-income residents across the country.
 - The newly formed government has approved the proposal to provide **3 crore additional** rural and urban houses under PMAY.

- The scheme has **two components**: PMAY-U for the urban poor and PMAY-G and PMAY-R for the rural poor.
- **PMAY-U (Urban)**
- **Objective**: To provide housing for all in urban areas.
- **Beneficiaries**: Economically Weaker Section (EWS), Low-Income Group (LIG) and Middle-Income Group (MIG).
- **Subsidy Schemes**:

- ◆ **Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme**: Offers interest subsidy on home loans for EWS, LIG, and MIG categories.
- ◆ **In-Situ Slum Redevelopment**: Utilizes land as a resource to provide houses to eligible slum dwellers.
- ◆ **Affordable Housing in Partnership**: Promotes partnerships with public and private sectors to provide affordable housing.
- ◆ **Beneficiary-Led Construction**: Provides financial assistance to individuals to construct or enhance their own houses.

● **PMAY-G (Gramin)**

- **Objective**: To provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses.
- **Beneficiaries**: Identified using the **Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011**.
- **Features**:
 - ◆ **Financial Assistance**: 1.2 lakh in plain areas and Rs. 1.3 lakh in hilly, difficult and Integrated Action Plan (IAP) areas.
 - ◆ **Construction**: Houses are to be constructed by beneficiaries with technical assistance from the government.
 - ◆ **Convergence with other schemes**: Encourages convergence with other schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) for toilet construction, and MGNREGA for wage employment

In first meet, Cabinet okays 3 cr new houses under PMAY

HARISH KISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 10

CHAIRING THE maiden Cabinet meeting of his third term on Monday Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved government assistance for the construction of three crore rural and urban houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

Of the three crore houses, two crore will be constructed under PMAY-Gramin, while 1 crore under PMAY-Urban. After the Cabinet meeting on official sources said, "It has been decided in the Cabinet meeting today to provide assistance to three crore additional rural and urban households for the construction of houses, to meet the housing requirements arising out of the increase in the number of eligible families."

In a post on X, Modi said the Cabinet's decision is a big step towards promoting dignified life and ease of living for crores of the countrymen. "Our government has today decided to expand the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and build 3 crore new houses in villages and cities. This decision also reflects our commitment to make the living standards of the people easier. This will not only fulfil the need of people for houses, but will also provide them a quality life. The expansion of PMAY also brings out our determination for development of all and social justice." (Sakshi Vikas, suri, 'Sangit')

Kalyan), "he said. The Indian Express had published a report on Monday that a proposal of two crore new PMAY-G houses and increase in the financial assistance to the beneficiaries is on the Union Cabinet's table and is likely to be approved. The PMO said after being informed in the Prime Minister's office that the Union Minister for the 3rd time, Modi signed his first bill authorising the release of 770 instalment of PM Kisan Nidhi.

This will benefit 1.3 crore farmers and distribute around Rs 20,000 crore," the PMO said in a statement. As per the statement, Modi said, "Ours is a government fully committed to rural Kalyan. It is therefore fitting that the first bill signed after taking charge is related to farmer welfare. We want to keep working even more for the farmers and the agricultural sector in the times to come."

Both the decisions were taken before the official announcement of portfolio to newly inducted ministers, showing the Prime Minister's imprimatur on issues related to farmers and the poor. Later in the evening, Union Minister Shree Singh was given the agriculture and rural development portfolios.

Under the PMAY-G, each beneficiary gets funds up to Rs 1.2 lakh in plain areas and Rs 1.3 lakh in hilly states, difficult areas, and tribal and backward districts under the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). It is also learnt that the Centre has decided to increase the assistance

provided to the beneficiaries under the PMAY-G by about 50 per cent. The sources said the Centre has decided to increase the cost of construction of the PMAY-G houses from existing Rs 1.2 lakh to Rs 1.8 lakh in the plain areas and Rs 1.9 lakh in the hilly areas.

These additional 2 crore PMAY-G houses will be over and above the 2.95 crore houses sanctioned under the rural scheme since its inception in 2016. Of these 2.95 crore, 2.81 crore have been built under the PMAY-G bill date.

The Centre and states share expenses in 60:40 ratio in case of plain areas, and in 90:10 ratio for northeastern states, two Himalayan states and the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. The Centre bears 100 per cent cost in case of other Union Territories, including the UT of Ladakh.

Presenting the Interim Budget for 2024-25, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced that 2 crore more houses will be built under PMAY-G in the next five years.

In her budget speech 2024-25, Sitharaman said despite the challenges due to Covid-19, implementation of PM Awas Yojana (Gramin) continued and the government was close to achieving the target of 3 crore houses. "Two crore more houses will be taken up in the next five years to meet the requirement arising from increase in the number of families," she had announced.

It should be people's PMO, can't be Modi's PMO: Modi

HARISH KISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 10

ASSUMING CHARGE of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for the third time, PM Narendra Modi said Monday that it is neither his wish nor his path that the PMO should become a "power centre", and that he has tried to develop it as a "catalytic agent" in the last 10 years.

Soon after taking charge, Modi addressed the officers and staff of the PMO. He said it has been an endeavour to make the office an institution of service and the people's PMO.

"Ten years ago, there was an image in our country that PMO is a very big power centre. I was neither born for power nor do I think of acquiring power. For me, it is neither my wish nor my path that PMO should become a power centre. Therefore, the steps that we have taken since 2014, we have tried to develop it as a catalytic agent. My endeavour has been that PMO should be an institution of service. PMO should be People's PMO, it can't be Modi's PMO," Modi said.

MCQ Current Affairs
11th June, 2024

1. Ghataprabha River is a tributary of which one of the following rivers?

- a) Kaveri
- b) Godavari
- c) Narmada
- d) Krishna

2. Birsa Munda was a tribal freedom fighter who played a pivotal role in the Indian independence movement, particularly in which of the following regions?

- a) Assam and Northeast India
- b) Chhotanagpur Plateau
- c) Malwa Plateau
- d) Aravalli Range

3. The term 'Air LORA', recently seen in the news, refers to:

- a) a cyber defense system for protecting critical infrastructure
- b) a satellite launched for global internet coverage
- c) an air-to-ground ballistic missile
- d) a new energy-efficient jet engine

4. Heat is a form of energy that is transferred from one body to another due to a:

- a) Pressure difference
- b) Temperature difference
- c) Volume difference
- d) Density difference

5. New Caledonia is an overseas territory of which one of the following countries?

- a) France
- b) United Kingdom
- c) Germany
- d) Portugal

Answers Current Affairs
11th June, 2024

1. d
2. b
3. c
4. b
5. a

